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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [KJUS](#) [EFIN](#) [ETRD](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA HOSTS MINI-DUBLIN GROUP
MEETING; USG ONLY SIGNIFICANT DONOR FOR COUNTERNARCOTICS

1. Summary. On December 5, Post hosted a meeting of the Tegucigalpa Mini-Dublin Group to coordinate with participating countries on counternarcotics assistance programs and the overall effectiveness of such programs. Along with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), countries that participated in the meeting include: the United States; United Kingdom; Japan; France; Spain; Sweden; Germany; and Italy. Discussion among participants provided a comprehensive examination of trends, threats, and counternarcotic assistance to Honduras. End Summary.

2. Post hosted a meeting December 5 of the Tegucigalpa Mini-Dublin Group to coordinate with participating countries on counternarcotics assistance programs and the overall effectiveness of such programs. The meeting began with members of the Embassy briefing the other countries. According to DEA, the most common and preferred method of transporting illegal narcotics is maritime go-fasts coming from Colombia (San Andreas Island), refueling off the Caribbean coast of Honduras, and then continuing to Mexico and the United States. Using small planes to transport narcotics is the second most common manner that drugs pass through Honduras destined for the United States. Planes land in Gracias a Dios, a remote northeastern region of Honduras, using clandestine runways. The least preferable method of transportation is by land, via the Pan-American highway, which is estimated to be used only 10 percent of the time, compared to air at 30 percent, and maritime at 60 percent.

3. Representatives from countries attending the meeting were interested in a wide range of issues, including: the systematic process of shipping the drugs from their point of origin to the final destination; who benefits from the transit process, and how much; the trend in the number of shipments each year; and whether or not authorities' efforts were impacting the market price of drugs. Methods of transportation, the economics of the drug trade, corruption, and the correlation between crime and drugs were other topics discussed at the meeting.

4. The support offered by participating countries varies greatly. The U.S. is by far the greatest provider of both direct and financial counternarcotics assistance to the Government of Honduras (GOH). Currently, the U.S. has a USD 2,750,000 assistance program for counternarcotics and police assistance aimed at helping the Ministry of Public Security, particularly the Frontier Police, to aid the fight against drug trafficking and to improve the police overall. The U.S. also has a USD 250,000 program to help the GOH more effectively investigate money laundering. For the past year, the U.S. has been helping the Organized Crime Unit of the Public Ministry, the Frontier Police, and the Financial Information Unit. The new Port Security Initiative will help better control trafficking in persons, terrorism, money laundering, and other transnational crimes.

5. At the present time, no other participating Mini-Dublin country has any special programs to help combat narco-trafficking. Spain primarily focuses on strengthening government organizations, socio-economic issues, and reducing the demand for drugs. France does not work directly in the war against drugs in Honduras, but offers some assistance to police. Japan provides minor technical assistance. The United Kingdom has two agents in Panama that work closely with Honduran police, although their focus is Jamaica, which serves as the transit point for most drugs entering Western Europe. The UNDP has an agreement with the European Union to identify and prevent trade in precursor chemicals, for which the UNDP spends ten million euros annually in the entire Central American region. Sweden provides funding to the forensics department of the Public Ministry, but is delaying any further aid until the next Attorney General is selected early next year. Germany has donated communications equipment and computers to the police and is currently considering assisting the K-9 unit. Italy provides no direct assistance to the GOH, but does provide some cooperation within the region.

Palmer